ESL PROGRAM REVIEW 2002
PHASE I—SURVEY

Summary of Questionnaire Results

Compiled by: Tim MacKay, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba and
Tony Tavares, Program Development Branch, Manitoba Education, Training and Youth

April 29, 2002

Manitoba Education, Training and Youth

Manitoba Education, Training and Youth Cataloguing in Publication Data

428.24071 ESL program review 2002. Phase I — survey: summary of questionnaire results

ISBN 0-7711-2361-2

1. English language—Study and teaching as a second language—Manitoba. 2. Educational surveys —Manitoba. I. Manitoba. Manitoba Education, Training and Youth.

104-03669/

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Introduction:

Improving opportunities for all learners so they may experience educational success is a priority for both schools and Manitoba Education, Training, and Youth. To do so requires that we be responsive to the linguistic and cultural diversity of learners in our schools. To this end, Manitoba Education, Training and Youth has undertaken a full review of English as a Second Language (ESL) programming in the 2001/02 school year. This review is intended to provide important information on the current state of ESL programming in the province and will result in a long-term strategy for strengthening ESL programming and supporting schools in their efforts to respond to the linguistic diversity of our students.

This report presents a summary of data obtained in Phase I of a multi-phase process intended to review and evaluate current ESL programming provisions in the K–S4 schools of Manitoba. This summary is intended to provide an initial indication of current ESL programming provisions in the province in order to guide further phases of the review process.

Background Information:

For this survey, three parallel questionnaires were developed: one for principals of public schools, one for principals of independent and band-operated schools, and one for superintendents of public school divisions and districts. Public schools were sent questionnaires if they had submitted ESL support grant applications to Manitoba Education, Training and Youth at some point over the past three school years. For the purposes of this survey, *Public schools* are those schools which fall under provincial legislation and jurisdiction and which must operate under the administration of a publicly elected school board. *Independent schools* in Manitoba can be either funded or non-funded but in both cases they are not subject to the requirement of operating under the administration of a publicly elected school board. *Band-operated schools* operate under a variety of administrative structures and are typically administered by a First Nations educational authority which is appointed by the respective band council or elected by band members.

The questionnaires were developed by a team of departmental employees and consultants and were distributed by mail to principals and superintendents in the 2001 fall school term. Responses were received until mid-February and were compiled and analyzed through the services of an external consultant. All information was entered into a database and statistics were generated using the SPSS (version 11) statistical software package.

A Note on Interpreting the Data:

Overall, the response rate to the questionnaires was quite positive with 67.8% of public schools and 74.5% of school divisions/districts responding. However, the response rates for independent schools (42.4%) and band-operated schools (24.5%) was not as strong. Therefore, caution must be exercised when interpreting the data collected and summarized in this report. The information provided should be considered as providing a general outline of the current situation and trends rather than a full or accurate picture of the current situation.

Definitions:

When reading the data presented in this summary, the following definitions may be of help:

Frequency: the number of responses to a specific item within each question.

Percent: the number of responses to an item expressed as a percentage of the total number of questionnaires received, including questionnaires with no answers given.

Valid percent: the number of responses to an item expressed as a percentage of only those questionnaires that answered the given question. This number is used to indicate the percentage of responses without allowing non-respondents to weigh the results for any given question. In other words, valid percent is the percentage of those actually providing a response to the question.

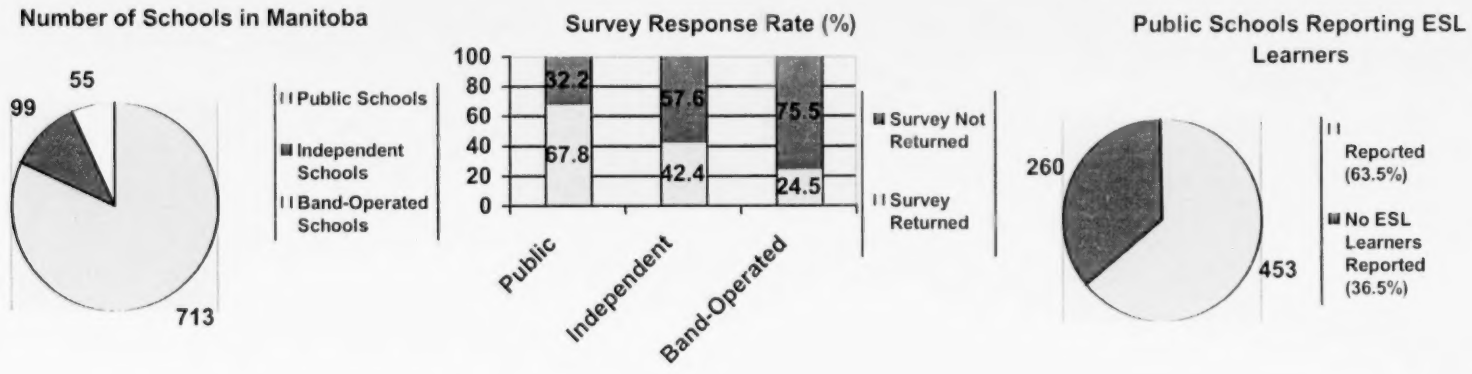
Missing-System: questionnaires received but with no answer given to the specific question.

Sum: the total number of items indicated by a specific question. For example, the sum of all students in the K–4 grade levels.

Mean: the statistical mean (average) response for a questionnaire item.

Rank: the numerical scale indicating the order of importance or the frequency an item has been indicated.

The School System: Student Numbers and Composition



Interpreting the Data:

Questionnaires were sent to all division/district superintendents, all independent and band-operated schools, and to all public schools that had reported having any ESL learners over the past three years. Using Manitoba Education, Training and Youth data, the number of such public schools was determined to be 453. This constitutes 63.5% of all public schools in Manitoba.

The overall response rate to the questionnaire was 61.1%. Complete response rates are detailed in the table that follows. Given the high response rate, the data presented in this report can be considered very representative of principals' and superintendents' perceptions of the current state of ESL programming and support in Manitoba K–S4 schools. However, given the relatively low response rate of band-operated schools, further research may be required to obtain a more accurate picture of ESL learners in these schools.

Questionnaire Response Rate

Target Group	No. Sent Out	No. Returned	Response Rate (%)
Public School Principals	453	307	67.8
Independent School Principals	99	42	42.4
Band-Operated School Principals	53	13	24.5
Division and District Superintendents	55	41	74.5
	660	**403**	**61.1**

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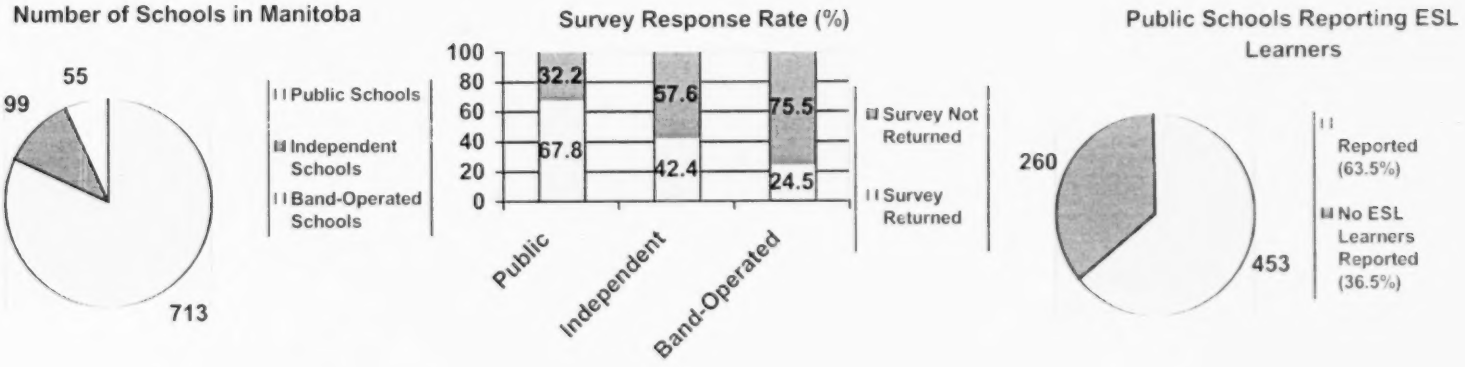

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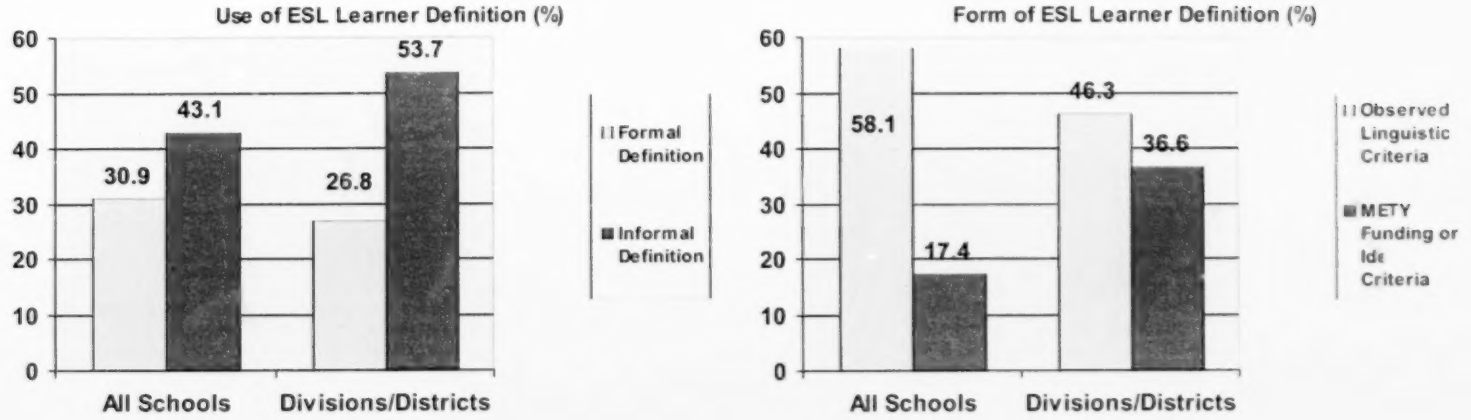
Defining ESL Learners



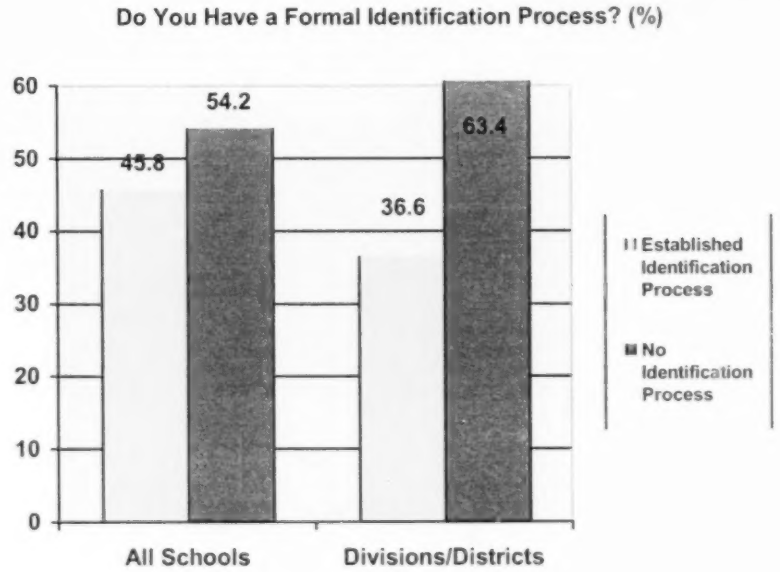
Interpreting the Data:

The charts above indicate survey findings regarding the use of ESL learner definitions. Respondents were asked if they had a formal or informal definition of an ESL learner and if so, what the definition in use was. The first chart makes clear that most responding schools and divisions make use of informal definitions of ESL learners and that only a relatively small proportion of total respondents indicate the use of a formal ESL learner definition.

The second chart was created after establishing categories for the forms of definitions described by respondents. As shown in the chart, two main categories emerged from the responses. The first of these categories included observed linguistic criteria regarding the learners; often these definitions relied on identifying learners solely on the basis of their first language or the language spoken in their home, or on the basis of anecdotal observations of the student's performance in English. The second category was made up of responses that indicated direct use of Manitoba Education, Training and Youth's identification protocol for purposes of allocating ESL Support Grants. As evidenced in the above chart, most responding schools and divisions reported the use of some sort of linguistic criteria to define ESL learners.

For a detailed description of Manitoba Education, Training and Youth's ESL protocol and funding criteria, visit the Department's website at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/cur/diversity/esl/index.html>.

Identification and Assessment



Interpreting the Data:

Given the multiple types and styles of ESL learner definitions in use, it is interesting to note that 46% of responding schools indicated that they do have some form of school-based process for identifying ESL learners. Similarly, close to 37% of responding divisions and districts reported having either school-based or division-based formal identification processes in place. However, few of the respondents returned the requested reference documents and guidelines. A small number of respondents provided anecdotal comments that ESL learners were identified through their school admissions process but these processes were not identified in the present survey.

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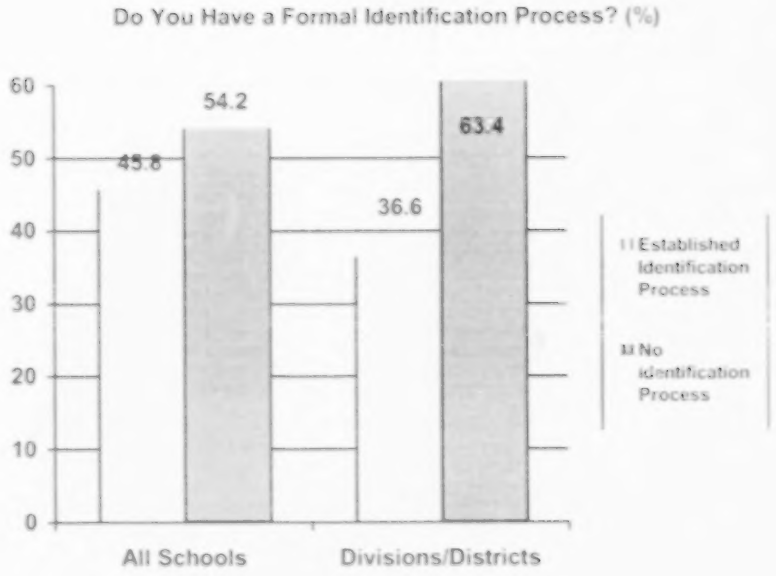

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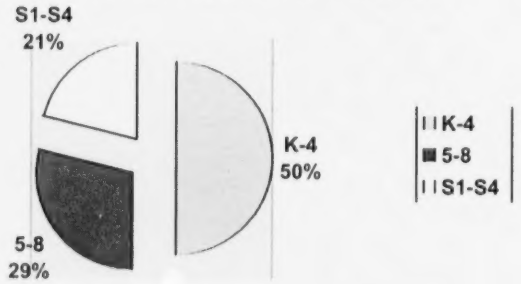
The ESL Population: Where is it? (1)

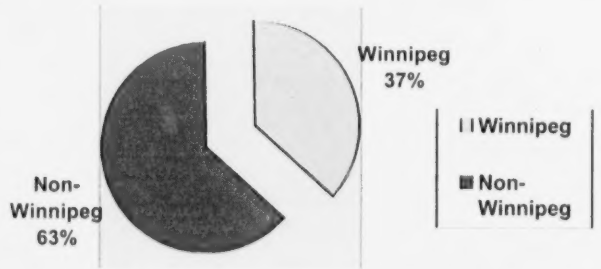
Total ESL Population by Grade Level



Number of ESL Learners in Manitoba Schools

Grade Level	Sum	Mean per sch reporting
No. of ESL learners K–4	4980	
No. of ESL learners 5–8	2863	
No. of ESL learners S1–S4	2102	
TOTAL	**9945**	
No. of ineligible learners	*1748*	

Total ESL Population by Location



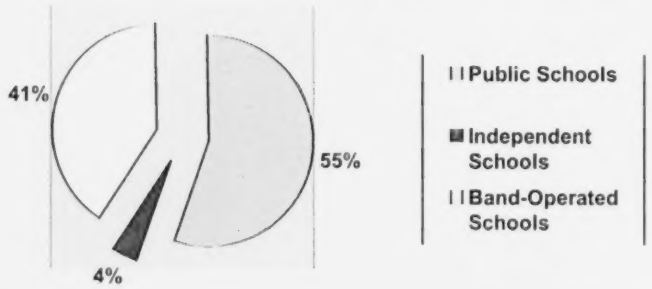
As initially reported, the distribution of ESL learners in Manitoba suggests that 37% of these learners are in Winnipeg, and 63% of these learners are in non-Winnipeg locations. This is interesting as the prevailing perception within the TESL professional community has been that the greatest proportion of ESL learners attend schools within the City of Winnipeg.

Interpreting the Data:

The results here indicate the number of ESL learners within the whole K–S4 school system (public, independent, and band-operated schools) as reported in the survey. Note that the questionnaire design did not allow respondents to indicate whether learners **not** eligible for the ESL Support Grant in public schools were included in the reported student numbers for the various grade levels. It is reasonable to assume that some of these learners were not reported in the preceding grade level numbers if respondents obtained data from Support Grant applications. Secondly, as the overall response rate to the survey was 61.1%, it is reasonable to assume that the actual numbers of ESL learners exceeds those reported by survey respondents. Thus, the number of ESL learners in the K–S4 system may be in excess of 10,000 students.

The ESL Population: Where is it? (2)

Total ESL Population by School Type



ESL Learner Population per Grade Level by School Type and Location

School Type	Grade Level			Total
	K–4	5–8	S1–S4	
Band-Operated	1868	1348	872	4088
Independent	110	92	177	379
Public	3002	1423	1051	5476
	4980	2863	2100	9943
Location				
Winnipeg	1970	854	799	3623
Non-Winnipeg	2987	2001	1300	6288
	4957	2855	2099	9911

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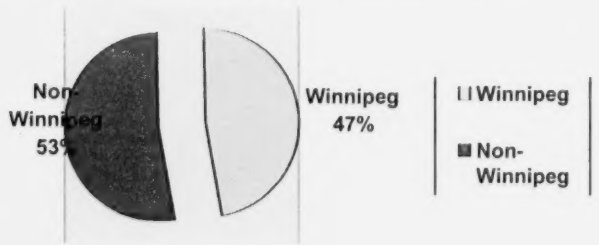

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Interpreting the Data:

Because of varying definitions of ESL learners and differences in the processes used to identify ESL learners within schools, the population numbers actually indicate the perceived number of learners within each reporting school rather than an empirical measure of ESL learners currently in Manitoba schools. To this end, several band-operated schools reported all of their students—at all grade levels—as ESL learners, reflecting a perception of ESL learners that may not be shared by all respondents. It is reasonable to suggest that if an ESL learner definition were used that focused on proficiency in the second language rather than a student's linguistic origins, the number of First Nations ESL learners in Grades 5–S4 would likely be significantly reduced. This would still provide a province-wide total in excess of 7700 ESL learners. Using this scenario, the resulting distribution is indicated in chart 2 (ESL Learner Population per Grade Level by School Type).

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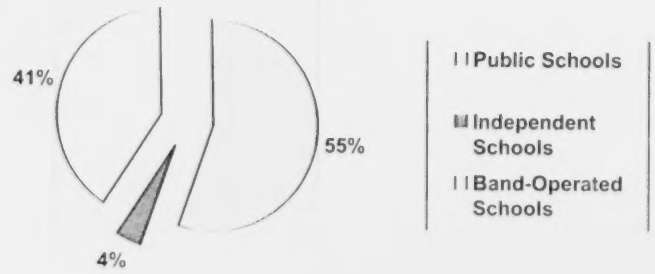

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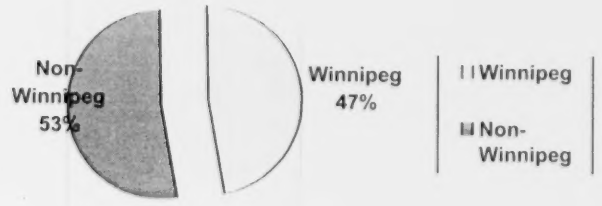

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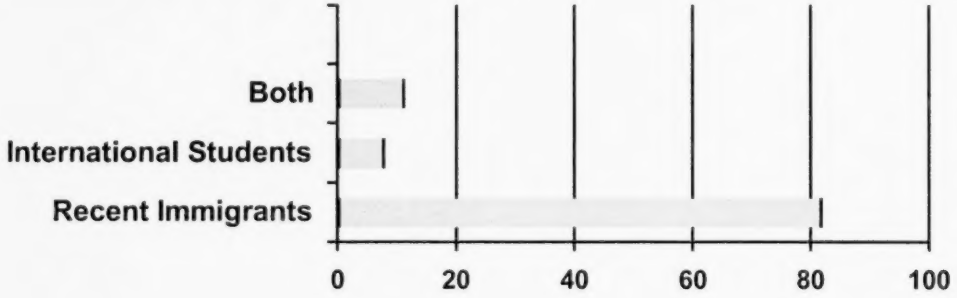
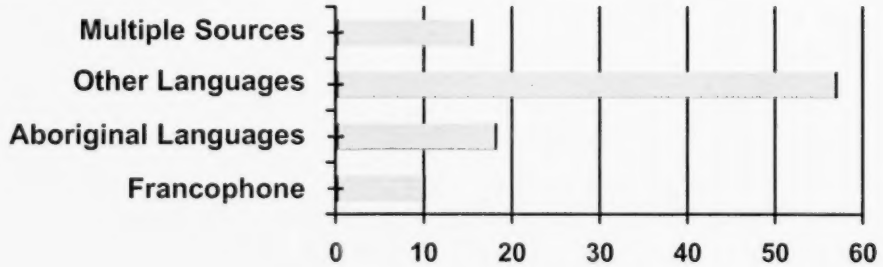
The Composition of ESL Learner Population

Sources of Learners—International (%)



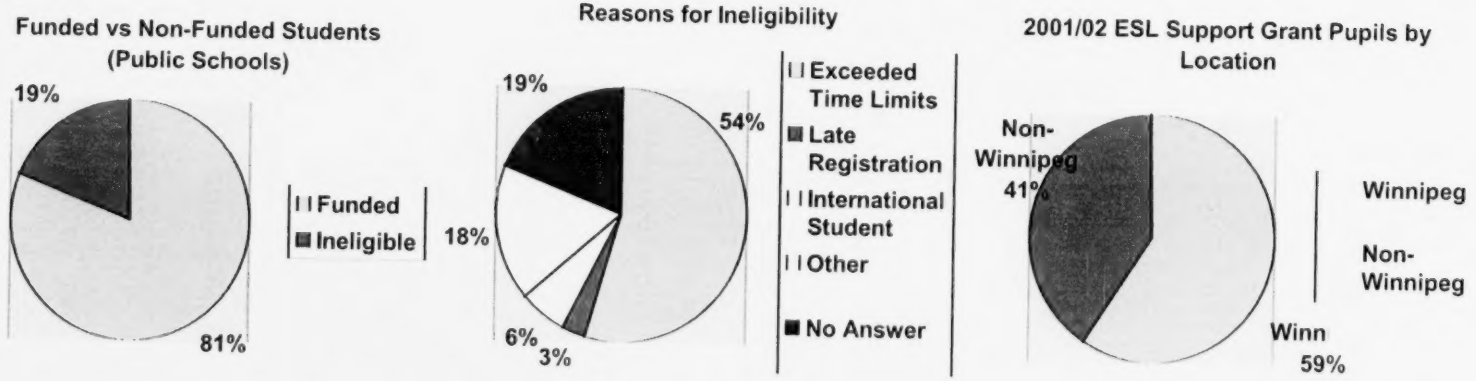
Sources of Learners—Canadian (by first language) (%)



Interpreting the Data:

The charts give some indication of the diversity of ESL learners in schools in Manitoba. Schools were asked to indicate the major sources of ESL learners. Newcomer or immigrant students are a significant factor but tend to be distributed unevenly. They are a major source of ESL learners in Winnipeg and Southern Manitoba. Aboriginal Learners are also an important component, particularly in Northern Manitoba. In rural schools, Hutterian students and students of Mennonite origins from Latin America and Europe are a significant factor.

The ESL Population in Public Schools: Student Eligibility



Interpreting the Data:

The above charts reflect aspects of ESL programming related to ESL learner eligibility for provincial ESL Support Grants. Current criteria used to determine learner eligibility can be found on the Department's Website at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/cur/diversity/esl/index.html>.

Current data on ESL Support Grant applications indicate that, as of September 30, 2001, applications were made for 4444 pupils (3885.5 Full-Time-Equivalent). Of these pupils, 2617 were in Winnipeg schools and 1827 were in non-Winnipeg schools. Almost 50% of survey respondents indicated that they did have students they considered ESL learners but who were not eligible for Support Grant funding. The number of learners reported in the survey for public schools suggests that 81% of ESL learners in public schools are currently registered for an ESL Support Grant. The second chart provides a summary of the reasons why students were ineligible.

Of those schools reporting ineligible ESL learners, 68% continued to provide ESL programming support to these learners.

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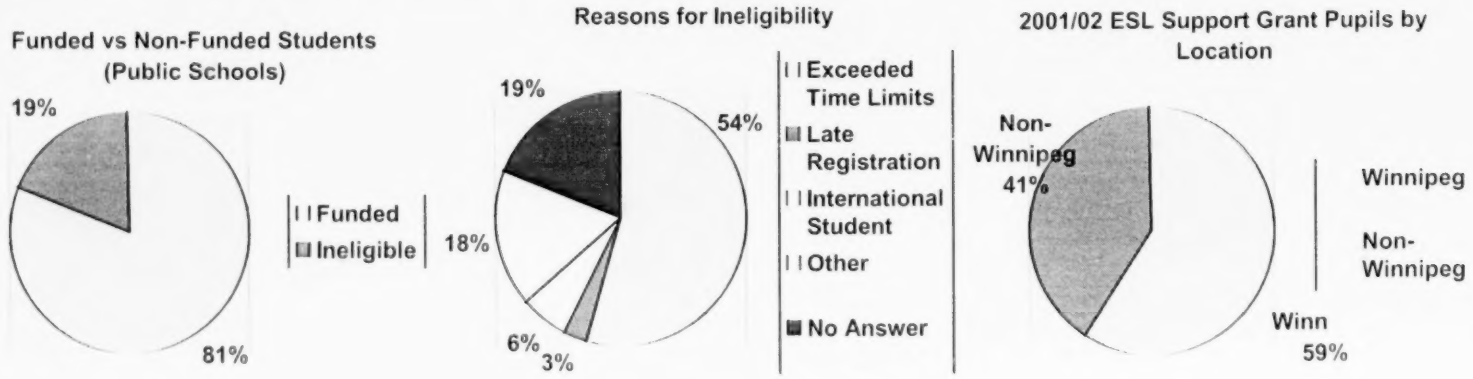

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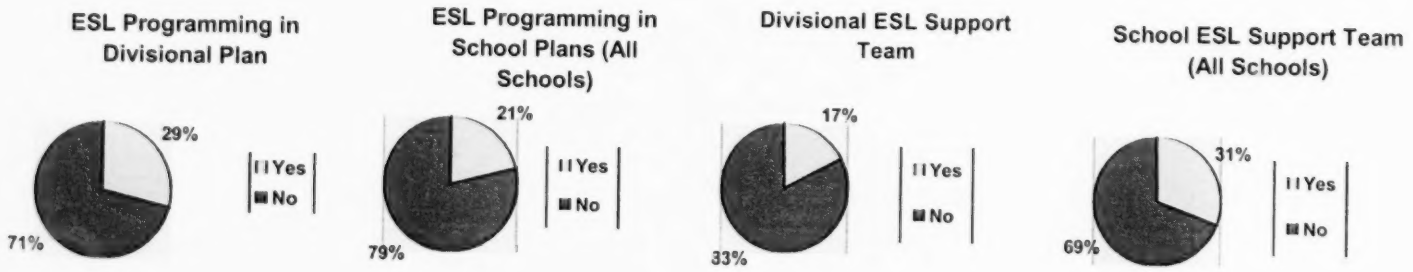
ESL Programming and Planning



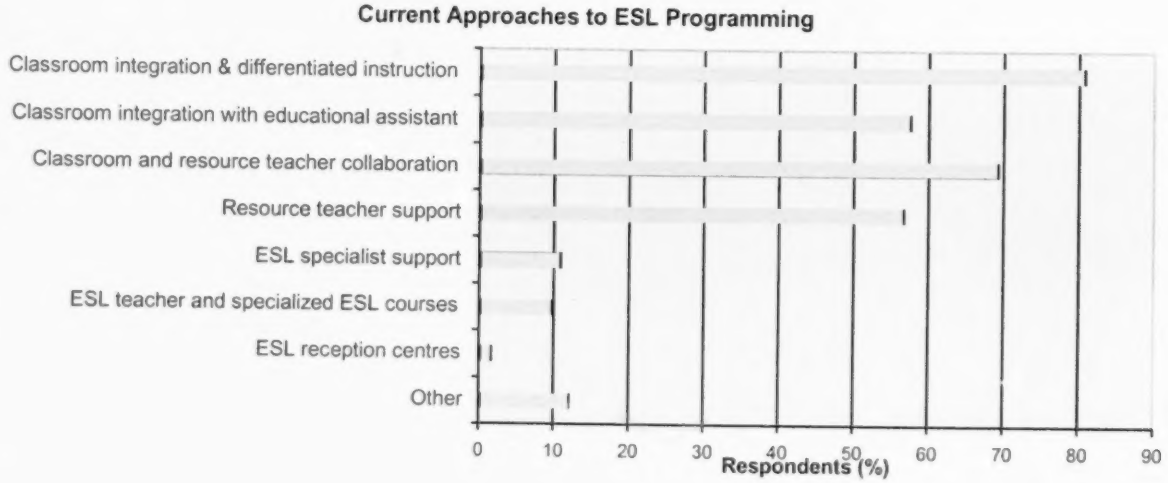
Interpreting the Data:

The charts above give a clear indication that ESL programming is not often a component of the annual plans of many of the schools and divisions that have ESL learners. Recall that 63.5% of Manitoba public schools reported having ESL learners at some time over the past three years, and it was these schools that were targeted in the survey. Thus, the number of divisions and schools reporting ESL programming in their school or divisional plan seems very low.

Given the high percentage of schools reporting ESL learners, it is also surprising to see that only a small percentage of reporting schools (31%) and divisions (17%) have indicated that they have an ESL support team.

When answering the question, "Who in the school is primarily responsible for coordinating and implementing ESL programming and supports?" 63.6% of responding principals indicated that a Resource Teacher was primarily responsible. This is in contrast to only 22 schools (6.5% of respondents) reporting a designated ESL Teacher as the person responsible for coordinating ESL programming. Currently there is no system-wide set of criteria or qualifications to designate ESL teachers. Therefore, what the term *ESL teacher* means may vary from school to school. In the context of this report, an ESL teacher may be considered as one whose primary responsibility is to work with ESL learners, not as someone who has specialized ESL training.

ESL Programming and Planning—Current Approaches

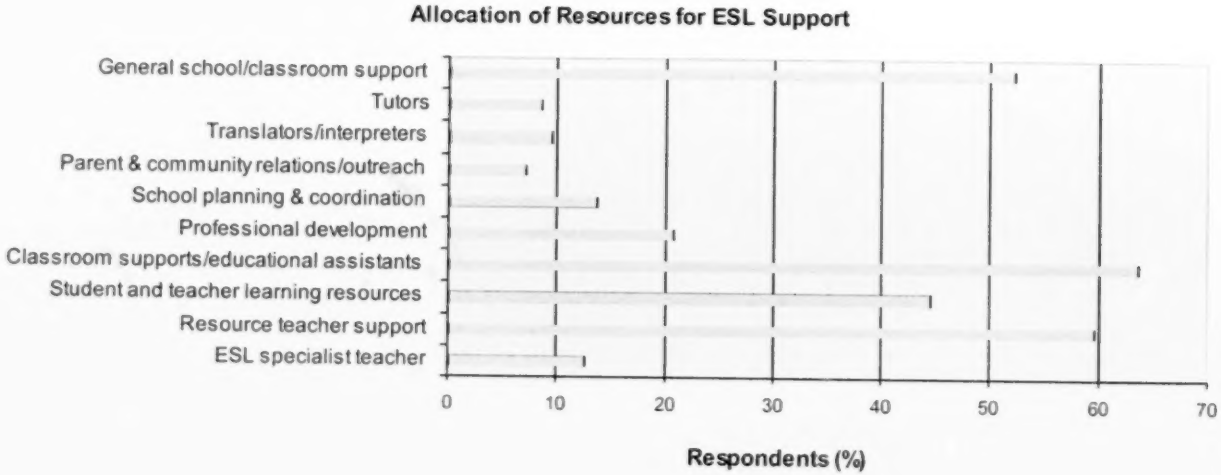


Interpreting the Data:

The chart above indicates which approaches to ESL programming are currently in place as reported by schools and divisions. **Classroom integration & differentiated instruction** was the most common response from principals and superintendents. In fact, in both principals' and superintendents' surveys, the four most common responses were identical, in the same rank order, and with almost identical proportions of responses. As was suggested by the overwhelming number of resource teachers who were identified as being primarily responsible for ESL programming and coordination, current approaches to ESL programming make great use of resource teacher support and collaboration. This chart also indicates the low level of ESL specialist teachers and courses used in current approaches to ESL programming in Manitoba schools.

It is interesting to note that responses to this question remained consistent when analyzed to determine if there were any differences among the responses of public schools, independent schools, and band-operated schools. There were also no differences between responses given by various school streams: elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, and K–S4 comprehensive schools all indicated the same approaches to ESL programming. Additionally, no differences were present between the responses of Winnipeg and non-Winnipeg schools.

ESL Programming and Planning—Current Resource Allocation

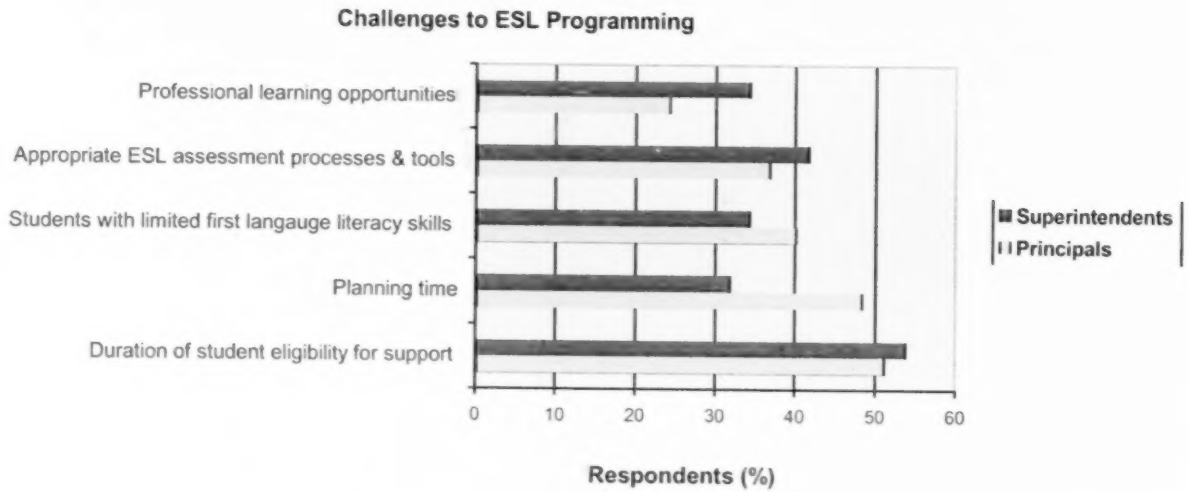


Interpreting the Data:

The chart above is based on responses to the questionnaire item that asked respondents to identify the three major areas of resource allocation for ESL support in schools. The results clearly support the information obtained regarding current approaches to ESL programming: most current programming involves classroom integration with resource-teacher or educational-assistant support. Thus, it follows that most schools would allocate resources to this approach. The results indicate that the three major areas for ESL resource allocation in schools are: classroom supports such as educational assistants (63.5% of respondents); resource teachers (59.6% of respondents); and general school and classroom support (52.1% of respondents). Note that only 41 schools (12.5% of respondents) indicated that they allocate resources for ESL specialist teachers. When interpreting this chart, please note that the data from this question indicate areas where resources are allocated but do not indicate the proportion of allocation to specific approaches at any given school.

A comparison of school types revealed that independent schools were significantly less likely to allocate resources to the use of classroom supports such as educational assistants.

Challenges to ESL Programming



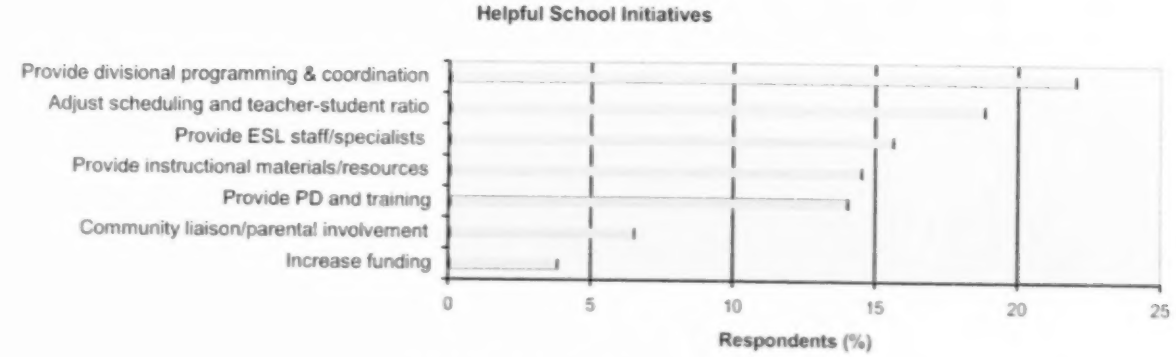
Interpreting the Data:

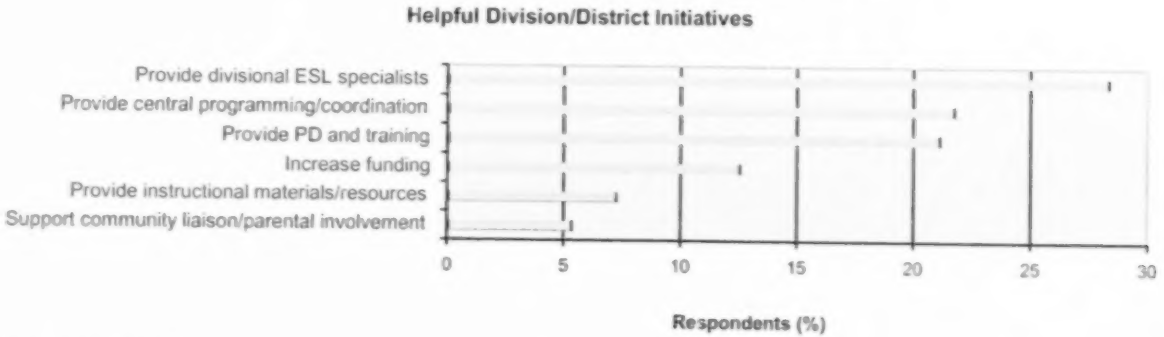
The chart above indicates principals' and superintendents' perceptions regarding the major issues and most significant challenges to providing adequate ESL programming and support. The chart indicates the top four responses given by principals and superintendents. It is of interest to note that while there was general agreement between principals and superintendents regarding the major challenges and issues, responses given for **Professional learning opportunities** resulted in a rank position of 3 for superintendents and a rank position of 8 for principals.

Other comparisons within the data reveal very little variation between groups of respondents. Of note, however, is that **Awareness of learning resources** and **Few ESL learners** were among the top four challenges and issues indicated by independent schools.

Despite the reported challenges and issues in providing adequate ESL programming and supports, when asked how they would rate the nature and level of ESL programming and supports in their school or division in terms of responding to the needs of learners, most principals and superintendents (49% in each group) rated their programs as *adequate*, resulting in mean scores that were only slightly below *adequate* overall. (Rated on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being weak and 5 being strong, mean responses were 2.90 for principals, and 2.68 for superintendents.)

Response to Challenges in ESL Programming (1)

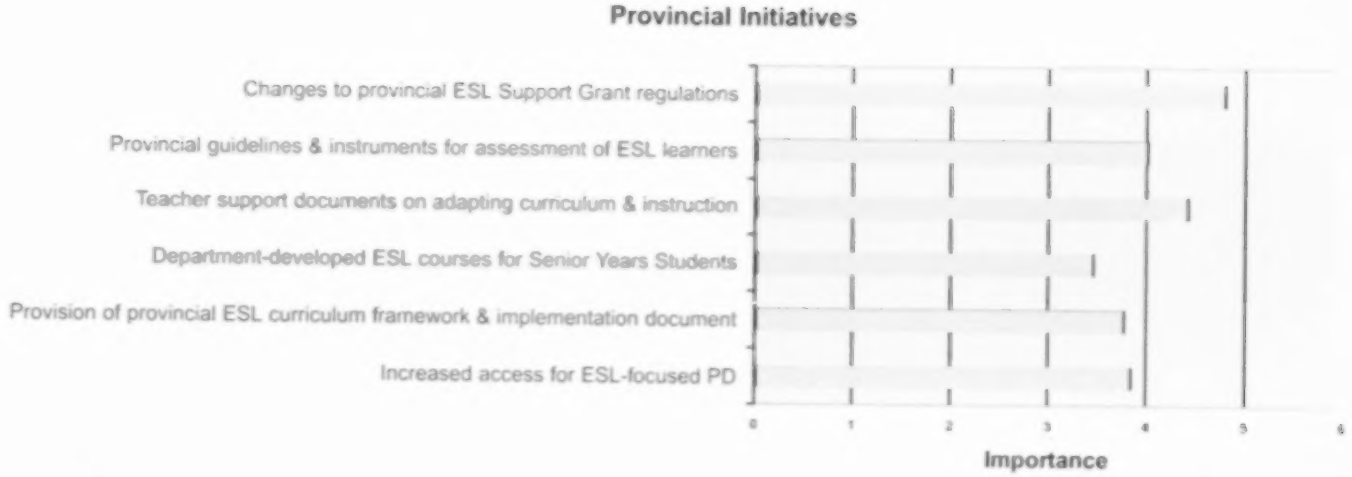




Interpreting the Data:

The above charts are based on responses by principals to a question asking them to describe or list initiatives at the school and division/district level which could help to strengthen programming and respond to the needs of learners. For this item, 51% of surveyed schools suggested school-level initiatives, while 42% of surveyed schools described division/district level initiatives. These responses were then interpreted into the categories presented in the charts. As indicated, responding principals suggested that division-based programming and coordination would be helpful at the school level. At the division level, the most recommended initiative was to provide divisional ESL specialists. This was followed by the recommendation for providing central programming and coordination. When looked at as a whole, the data suggest that schools do not feel they have the level of expertise required to address their ESL programming needs and want this expertise to be coordinated through their respective school divisions.

Response to Challenges in ESL Programming (2)



Interpreting the Data:

The above chart demonstrates results where school respondents were asked to rank, in order of importance, a list of provincial initiatives that would strengthen ESL programming and outcomes for ESL students. As indicated, **Changes to provincial ESL Support Grant regulations** was ranked as the most important provincial initiative by responding principals. Ranked second in importance was the provision of teacher support documents on adapting curriculum and instruction. Of least importance was **Provision of provincial ESL curriculum framework & implementation documents** and **Department-developed ESL courses for Senior Years students.**

However, there were some significant differences in which schools in different locations and under different administrative structures answered this question. Additionally, superintendents answered differently than school principals. The following table provides a comparison of the ranking given to these provincial initiatives by different groups of respondents.

Provincial Initiatives							
Initiative	RANK (*1 = most important, 6 = least important*)						
	All Schools	Winnipeg Schools	Non-Winnipeg Schools	Public Schools	Independent Schools	Band-Operated Schools	Superintendents
Increased access for ESL-focused PD	4	5	3	4	4	2	4
Provision of Provincial ESL curriculum framework and implementation document	5	4	6	5	3	1	5
Department-developed ESL courses for Senior Years students*	6	6	5	6	5	5	3
Teacher support documents on adapting curriculum & instruction	2	1	2	2	1	3	1
Provincial guidelines and instruments for assessment of ESL learners	3	3	4	3	2	4	2
*Changes to provincial ESL Support Grant regulations***	1	2	1	1	-	-	-

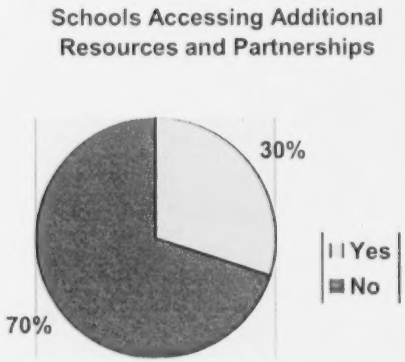
**Only responses from schools that reported having secondary students were considered in this item.*

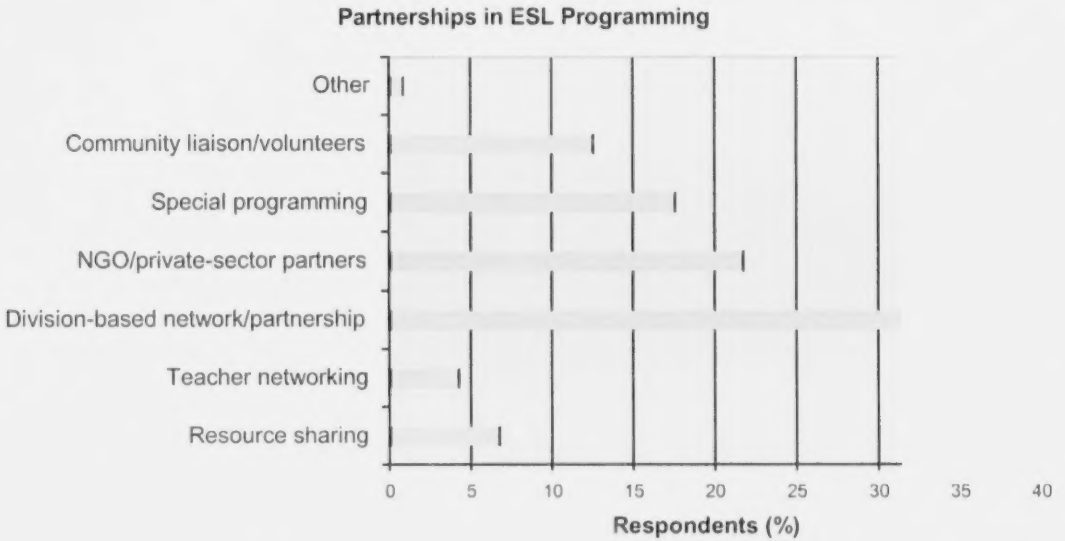
***This item did not appear on the questionnaire given to independent schools, band-operated schools, and superintendents.*

Interpreting the Data:

Of note in the comparisons above is that band-operated schools have indicated a strong preference for the development and provision of a provincial ESL curriculum framework and implementation document. Other school types did not share this preference. Additionally, band-operated schools have indicated a preference for increased access to ESL-focused professional development. Considered together, these preferences suggest that band-operated schools are not as confident in their capacity to generate ESL-focused curriculum and training to meet the needs of ESL learners in their schools.

Accessing Resources and Partners





Interpreting the Data:

While most schools (69.6% of respondents) have not been able to establish partnerships or access resources that enhance ESL programming, 30% of schools have been able to find some additional resources or partnerships to enhance their ESL programming. Of these schools, the most common undertaking is some form of division-based program or network. In addition, some schools have been able to develop some form of partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGO) and private sector enterprises.

Conclusions

1. The total population of ESL learners in Manitoba schools will remain difficult to determine without a consistent, province-wide definition. Until this definition is developed and applied, it will remain difficult to identify learners and to provide programming to suit their needs.

2. As a corollary to point 1, there is some uncertainty as to which Aboriginal learners may accurately be defined as ESL learners and would benefit from ESL programming. "Standard" English as a Second Dialect may be an appropriate manner in which to describe the linguistic background of many Aboriginal learners. Due consideration needs to be given to this concept in the emerging ESL learner definition and programming protocol.

3. A formal identification process is required, which should include some form of assessment of English language proficiency. Learner ability and age may provide some criteria to help determine the amount and duration of funding and support.

4. The low number of schools and divisions reporting ESL programming in their school or division plans suggests an absence of formalized approaches to ESL programming. A provincial curriculum framework, or another instructional and assessment tool, that takes age, ability level, and learner characteristics into account, is essential for formalizing and improving ESL programming in schools. This framework should also account for developmental and social aspects of ESL learners, as well as special needs of some ESL learners.

5. There is a need to explore and consider alternate funding models which will contribute to the development and implementation of more effective ESL programming models and support for Manitoba ESL learners.

6. Classroom teachers, resource teachers, and educational assistants who currently undertake the vast majority of ESL programming and supports are in need of accessible and appropriate professional learning opportunities to meet the demands of this aspect of their work. Further, principals and superintendents have indicated the need for division-based coordination and ESL specialist teachers; staffing and training requirements for these positions should also be a provincial concern.